

October 6, 2011

## South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs

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# AIR FORCE CADETS ASSIST PIERRE/FT PIERRE COMMUNITIES

It didn't take long for cadets from the U.S. Air Force Academy to get to work last Friday in Pierre. Less than three hours after arriving by bus in the early morning hours, the estimated 140 cadets and six officers started what they were in Pierre to do – help with flood cleanup. The cadets spent most of their time doing sand bag removal in residential areas north of Fort Pierre and in the Pierre area, as well as work in Pierre area parks.

Governor Dennis Daugaard and COL (retired) Steve Harding, deputy secretary for the SD Department of the Military and SD Department of Veterans Affairs welcomed the cadets at breakfast, saying they were “a welcomed sight.”

Residents greeted the cadets when they arrived at the Hillview Golf Course Clubhouse with signs of welcome and thank you. They felt it was important for people to make sure the cadets knew they were appreciated. This was a “free” weekend meaning the cadets had a three-day weekend with no school obligations. While many took the weekend off, these cadets gave up their weekend to volunteer.



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## DON'T FLY WITH ME

Soldiers of the Drug Demand Reduction (DDR) team, South Dakota National Guard Counterdrug program, along with other sponsors throughout the Sioux Falls area, hosted its first annual coloring contest billboard unveil event on Monday, Sept. 26. The billboard, at the intersection of Russell Ave. and Westport Ave., supports the drug awareness Red Ribbon Week, which is the largest, most visible awareness campaign in the United States.

London Van Sickle, a fifth grade student at Journey Elementary in the Harrisburg school district, won the contest with a colorful, powerful message behind it. "The dragon is destroying the drugs," said Van Sickle, age 10. "I really think bad drugs, like cigarettes and stuff, are horrible and a waste of money. Red Ribbon week is about telling the whole world that drugs are bad and they can hurt people."

The coloring contest, which ran from Aug. 1 through Sept. 16, was put on in order to bring more awareness about drugs and alcohol to elementary students throughout the region.

The theme, "Drugs don't fly me" gave kindergarten through fifth grade students a chance to get creative in order to win several gifts donated by the sponsors, including a pizza party for the entire school donated by CiCi's pizza.

"We wanted to bring awareness of Red Ribbon Week and its message to Sioux Falls and the surrounding communities," said Staff Sgt. David Hughes, Drug Demand Reduction noncommissioned officer for the Counterdrug program. "We decided what better way to do that than a coloring contest for kids."

"This event was definitely a success and we hope to continue year after year," said Staff Sgt. Matthew Hurney, DDR NCO. "Without the help of our partners – CiCi's Pizza, Lamar Advertising, Sisson Printing, Results Radio and Lewis Drug – this event couldn't have been possible; we couldn't be happier with the way these organizations have come together with us to support a drug free community."





## FALL MINI CONFERENCES

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs will be hosting mini-conferences October 25 – October 27, 2011.


Staff from the Pension Maintenance Center will be providing updates on veterans and widows pension EVR's, application procedures etc. As in the past, the training sessions are scheduled to run from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm at the following locations.

- Oct. 25        Rapid City – VFW, 420 Main Street
- Oct. 26        Pierre - American Legion, 520 So. Pierre Street
- Oct. 27        Brookings – VFW, 520 Main Avenue

## CONTACT INFORMATION FOR WOMEN OF WAR PROJECT

The Women of War project, dedicated to female veterans and their children everywhere, has a new website: <http://www.womenofwarproject.com>. Their mailing address is W.O.W. Campus, 10955 Water Tank Road, Belle Fourche, SD 57717. Their phone number and fax numbers are as follows: (P) 605-723-8672 (F) 605-723-8673. Their new email address is [wow@communityvisn.org](mailto:wow@communityvisn.org).

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*Women of War*  
W.O.W. - Women of War Project

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### *Women of War Project*

Dedicated to Women Veterans and their children everywhere. We are here to insure that no Veteran is forgotten while keeping the special needs of the woman veteran in mind.



## KELPIN ENDS TENURE AS ESGR STATE CHAIR

In 1996, Donald Kelpin decided he wanted to volunteer his time helping those who help others – National Guard and Reserve service members. As a volunteer for the South Dakota Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, or SD ESGR, he helped to resolve issues between local employers and service members in communities throughout the state. Nearly 15 years later, Kelpin would find himself at the top of the SD ESGR ranks as the state chair, and steering the efforts of the state's committee; providing leadership, guidance and support to nearly 50 volunteers statewide, where he once started.

On Saturday, Oct. 1, Kelpin turned over the reins of the state chair position to Ronald Mielke, a retired brigadier general who served as the assistant adjutant general for the South Dakota Air National Guard from 1995–2002.

"Don's leadership and dedication as the state chair has been truly outstanding," said Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general for the South Dakota National Guard. "The South Dakota National Guard will be forever in his debt."

For eight years Kelpin served in the state chair's role, where he volunteered more than 5,000 hours overseeing all the activities of ESGR's military outreach, employer outreach and ombudsman services. ESGR is a Department of Defense volunteer agency that seeks to promote a culture in which all American employers support and value the military service of their employees. ESGR recognizes outstanding support, increase awareness of the law, and resolve conflicts through informal mediation.

Kelpin stepped into the chair's seat at a critical time, just as the South Dakota National Guard would begin to see troop deployment at rates not seen since World War II, and his leadership would prove invaluable to both organizations. During the span of his tenure, Kelpin would see more than 4,600 Army Guardsmen and more than 1,000 Air Guardsmen deploy overseas.

"It's been a team effort and I cannot say enough about our teams – the employers, the military and our dedicated volunteers. They deserve all the credit," he said. "We've been ahead of the ESGR national curve in South Dakota."

For three years now, the SD ESGR program has been providing Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) training with employers. SD ESGR ombudsmen also work in conjunction with the Department of Labor – something that will become a requirement next year for all ESGR committees across the nation.

Kelpin has also received recognition for his efforts. He was awarded the Secretary of Defense Medal for Exceptional Public Service in 2011, the Spirit of Volunteerism Award for lifetime achievement in 2008 and 2010, the Williamson Militiaman Award in 2007, and the Presidential Volunteer Service Award in 2005 for 4,897 volunteer hours.

For more information about ESGR, visit their website at: <http://sdesgr.org/>.



## THREE SD GUARD UNITS ALERTED FOR DEPLOYMENT

Three South Dakota Army National Guard units have been alerted for deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The 1978th Contingency Contracting Team of Rapid City, the 927th Survey and Design Team of Sioux Falls, and the 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion of Pierre have all received mobilization alert orders for deployments to Afghanistan in 2012 and 2013.

The 1978th and its four assigned members are tentatively scheduled for deployment in December 2012. The mission of the 1978th is to plan for and coordinate all contracting functions at a brigade or combat team level. The unit will be responsible for assisting with the development and administration of contracting support plans, policy and appendices in support of operational, contingency, and deliberate plans associated within an area of responsibility.

The 927th and its 14 assigned members are tentatively scheduled for deployment in May 2013. The mission of the 927th is to plan, conduct, prepare and provide planning studies and tests for identified engineer work projects. They also provide guidance, legal descriptions, certification and surveys for engineer projects.

The 152nd and 69 assigned members of its Headquarters and Headquarters Company are tentatively scheduled for deployment in July 2013. The mission of the 152nd is to provide multi-functional combat support and combat service support to forces throughout an assigned area of operation. Multi-functional areas include supply, transportation, maintenance and ordnance support.

All three units are expected to report to an active-duty mobilization station at a time and location to be determined to complete all required training prior to deployment overseas. This is the first deployment for each unit listed above.



## RAPID CITY STAND DOWN

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs will be participating in the VA Black Hills Health Care System's (VABHHCS) Stand Down Oct. 13 in Rapid City. The Stand Down is sponsored by the VABHHCS, Goodwill Industries, Rapid City Vet Center, American Legion, Rapid City Veterans Council, US Department of Labor, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Black Hills Homeless Coalition and the Corner Stone Mission.

The Stand Down will run from 9:00 am until 2:00 pm at Bethel Assembly (1202 N. Maple Avenue) in Rapid City. The Stand Down is an extensive service fair for homeless veterans and their families offering a period of respite from the streets and an opportunity to meet with county, state and federal veteran representatives. Services include a meal, clothing, community housing referrals, medical and dental treatment, readjustment counseling, legal assistance, information on VA benefits, financial and economic information and much more.

Stand Down is a military term, which refers to fresh troops taking care of exhausted combat troops by moving them from the battlefield to an environment that is safe and secure. The depleted combat soldiers are given medical attention, food fresh clothing and an opportunity to get cleaned up, rest and recuperate.

For additional information or questions please contact Rodger Woeppel, VA Black Hills Stand Down Coordinator at (605) 745-2000 ext. 92114.

## VABHHCS OFFERING FLU VACCINES

The VA Black Hills Health Care System (VABHHCS) will be offering seasonal flu vaccine clinics for enrolled veterans at the following locations and times:

Fort Meade VA Medical Center – on Fridays, beginning Oct. 7, from 7:30 am-4:00 pm in Waiting Room #3 on a walk-in basis or during a regularly scheduled appointment with their Primary Care provider.

Hot Springs VA Medical Center - Monday through Friday, beginning Oct. 3 from 9:00 am–3:00 pm through Primary Care on a walk-in basis or during a regularly scheduled appointment with their provider.

### Rapid City VA Clinic

Flu Clinic will be held Oct. 19 from 9:00 am – 3:00 pm at The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA) Bingo Hall (1981 E. Centre Street) in Rapid City. After Oct. 19 by appointment. Please call the RC Clinic at 605-718-1095 Ext. 3051 to schedule an appointment.

VA Black Hills is also offering flu shots to enrolled veterans through its upcoming rural health clinics:

Pine Ridge Clinic – Veterans can receive their flu shots on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday or the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month on a walk-in basis.

Newcastle, WY Clinic –Starting in Nov. veterans may receive their flu vaccine on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays of the month (unless the date falls on a holiday).

VA Black Hills Veterans who receive their care through the:

Linn Medical Clinic in Pierre or at Prairie Community Health Clinics in Isabel and Faith may receive vaccinations during regular business hours as a walk-in. Eagle Butte Clinic requests that veterans call to schedule an appointment.

Gordon Clinic will be offering a flu shot clinic on Oct. 6 from 7:00 am to 8:00 am and on Oct. 26 from 5:30 pm-6:30 pm. Vaccines will also be provided during regularly scheduled appointments with the veteran's provider.

Scottsbluff Clinic will provide flu shot clinics Oct. 14 and Oct. 19 from 7:30 am - noon and 1:00 pm to 4:30 pm. They will also provide vaccinations as walk-ins during regular business hours and at regularly scheduled appointments.

Mission Clinic requests that veterans call to schedule an appointment for the flu vaccine during regular business hours or may be received at a regularly scheduled appointment.

Avera Medical Clinic in Winner will provide flu vaccinations Monday through Friday between 8:00 am - noon and 1:00 pm-5:00 pm. A courtesy call would be appreciated but walk-ins will be seen.

Veterans are advised to call prior to their vaccination to ensure vaccine is available. Please call 800-743-1070 or 800-764-5370, press #7 and listen to the recorded message which will provide you with the most current information on clinics and vaccine availability.

Veterans are asked to bring their VA identification card.





## UPCOMING EVENTS

October 13—Stand Down—Rapid City  
October 14—Women's Veterans Conference—Holiday Inn City Centre—Sioux Falls  
October 14-16—VABHHCS Women's Retreat  
October 25—SDDVA Fall Mini Conference—Rapid City  
October 26—SDDVA Fall Mini Conference—Pierre  
October 27—SDDVA Fall Mini Conference—Brookings  
November 11—Grand Opening of Women of War Center  
November 11—Veterans Day  
November 17—SD Veterans Council Legislator Roundtable—Aberdeen  
November 18—SD Veterans Council Legislator Roundtable—Chamberlain  
November 19—SD Veterans Council Legislator Roundtable—Piedmont  
December 2—SD Veterans Council Legislator Roundtable—Watertown  
December 3—SD Veterans Council Legislator Roundtable—Sioux Falls  
December 10—National Wreaths Across America Remebrance

## SD VETERANS COMMISSION MEETS

The South Dakota' Veterans Commission met this week in Sioux Falls. During their two-day meeting they heard from the SD Department of the Military, the SD Department of Veterans Affairs, the Sioux Falls VA Health Care System, the Veterans Service Organizations, the Congressional delegation's staff, ESGR, the Vet Centers and the Regional Office.

Bill Locken was selected as the 2012 chairman and KC Russell was selected as vice chairman. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Commission toured the VA facilities.

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